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NSC BRIEFING

SOVIET LEADERSHIP: SUMMARY

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- I. Khrushchev has won a thumping political victory over his internal opposition and is now firmly in the saddle.
 - A. However, it is not clear yet how much he owes to another "man on horseback," Marshal Zhukov.
 - B. Khrushchev has ousted five of his eleven colleagues from full membership in the Party Presidium (another from candidate membership) and from their government posts.
 1. Nine new members--almost all Party functionaries--have been brought into the Presidium to create a body in which Khrushchev's authority will be overwhelming if still short of absolute.
 2. He has thus made almost a clean sweep of the top officials in the government and put government administration firmly under Party control.
- II. The defeated opposition had clashed with him on many issues, including policy toward Satellites, and ways of handling intellectual ferment at home, economic policy.
 - A. Immediate issue was probably economic reorganization now in progress, which opposition may have felt was undercutting their power in government.
 - B. Opposition called Presidium meeting in which they may have achieved momentary majority. Zhukov's intervention, however, probably turned tide against them.

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- C. Khrushchev then called meeting of Central Committee, which he controls, to discipline the defeated faction. Although the culprits defended themselves strongly, they finally collapsed and confessed their guilt.
- D. Most evidence suggests that they will be brought to trial eventually.
- E. No word of other ousters yet, but we expect some.

III. Khrushchev now has a free hand to make policy, but his charges against the "anti-party group" have limited his freedom of action.

- A. No immediate change in policy is anticipated, since it is clear that he has been pretty much calling the tune at least since February.
- B. In foreign policy, peaceful coexistence line will be continued (Molotov was accused of wanting hard line, sabotaging disarmament, etc.)
- C. Softer line will produce renewed pressures from Satellites for independence from Soviet control.
- D. Economic problems which showed up in December have not yet been solved. Khrushchev may be promising Soviet people more than he can deliver.

IV. Note: Detailed presentations are broken down as follows.

- A. Narrative of Events
- B. The Losing Faction
- C. The Winning Faction
- D. External Policy Implications
- E. Domestic Policy Implications

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